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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 000133

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND NEA/IPA, PRM FOR PRM/ANE; NSC FOR
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/13/2014
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SUBJECT: GAZA HUMANITARIAN UPDATE -- JANUARY 14

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Kerem Shalom crossing was open on January 14 for approximately 100 truckloads. Nahal Oz fuel transfer station and Karni conveyor belt were closed. An estimated 10 trucks of medical supplies entered through Rafah. ICRC and Gaza water and sanitation authorities reported significant problems in coordination with the IDF for movement of technicians and repair teams. UNRWA is operating 41 shelters for approximately 38,000 persons. End summary.

Crossings Update

¶2. (SBU) January 14: Kerem Shalom crossing was open for approximately 100 trucks. The Karni conveyor belt and Nahal Oz fuel transfer station were closed. An estimated 10 truck loads of medical supplies and 25 ambulances entered through Rafah.

¶3. (SBU) January 13: OCHA contacts reported 97 truckloads of humanitarian and commercial supplies entered through Kerem Shalom. Karni conveyor belt and Nahal Oz crossings were closed. The ICRC rotated a surgical team in and out of Erez crossing.

¶4. (SBU) Fuel continues to be transferred by truck through Kerem Shalom. Kerem Shalom's fuel capacity is reportedly 10 truckloads (400,000 liters) per day of any type of fuel except cooking gas. Fuel transfers at Kerem Shalom are pumped through a 300-meter hose from an Israeli truck to a Palestinian truck.

¶5. (SBU) USG Assistance: On January 14, CHF began distribution of 26,310 kg of plastic sheeting purchased by USAID.

Internal Coordination/Distribution

¶7. (SBU) A "humanitarian pause" occurred between 1300 and 1600 local on January 14. Contacts in Gaza City reported that both sides appeared to reduce military engagements during that time. UN contacts reported that the GOI plans a four-hour pause on January 15.

¶8. (SBU) Both UNRWA and ICRC contacts reported the GOI has not approved coordination requests quickly enough to allow movements. As a result, UNRWA canceled five of its seven movements on January 13.

¶9. (SBU) OCHA noted that pockets of civilians are still trapped in areas that ambulances and aid organizations cannot reach. ICRC told Poloff that some Gazans in Atatra, Zaytun, and east Jabaliya have been cut off from food and medical

care for over one week, and the wounded in particular are "running out of time." On January 13, ICRC evacuated 100 people from Zaytun. The evacuation reportedly was done on foot, as IDF road obstacles, such as dirt mounds, prevented vehicle access. Filippo Grandi, Deputy Commissioner of UNRWA, told Econ Chief on January 14 that "These lulls are a little bit of a fiction. What is really important is coordination with the Israelis. This is what makes safe movement inside Gaza possible."

Water and Sanitation

¶10. (SBU) Sewage continues to flow into the streets in Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahya, according to OCHA contacts. ICRC reported that an artillery shell hit the Gaza City sewage ponds (south of Gaza City, near Netzarim junction), causing a major breach in the pond embankments on January 14. UNRWA contacts confirmed the damage is limited to the sewage plant area.

¶11. (SBU) The chief engineer of the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, Monther Shoblak, told Econoff January 14 that IDF operations make it impossible for his technical teams to move.

¶12. (C) The Palestinian Water Authority's (PWA) Director of Operations and Planning in Gaza, Sadi Ali, told Econoff that Jabaliya's main water lines and power transformers were destroyed during IDF operations in recent days. He confirmed the two main wells in Jabaliya are not accessible, due to the activity of IDF tanks and bulldozers in the area. (Note: Ali

JERUSALEM 00000133 002 OF 002

told Econoff that his brother's family had been pinned down by the IDF in a small farmhouse east of Jabaliya for five days, after IDF shelling destroyed their home. Ali said that IDF troops would shoot at his brother when he tried to leave his farmhouse. For five days, his brother and two nephews ate animal feed and had no access to potable water. Ali said neighbors told him that IDF troops approached the farmhouse on January 13, shots were heard, and an IDF bulldozer destroyed the farmhouse. Ali told Econoff that numerous other families in that area had their homes and farms razed by IDF tanks and bulldozers since January 12. End note.)

¶13. (SBU) PWA contacts reported on January 14 that potable water is in short supply in northern Gaza. The PA is attempting to coordinate the transfer of 10 water tankers to Gaza from the West Bank, according to UN contacts.

Fuel and Electricity

¶14. (SBU) The Gaza power plant produced 28 MW of electricity on January 14. The plant has enough fuel to operate until January 16 at this rate. With additional fuel, the plant could produce 70-75 MW, according to power plant managers. Both of the plant's outgoing high-voltage lines were repaired by Palestinian technical crews on January 11-12.

¶15. (SBU) UNRWA contacts reported that 20 percent of Gaza City is without electricity; 40 percent has less than eight hours/day; and 40 percent has between 8-12 hours/day.

Displacement

¶16. (SBU) UNRWA is operating 41 emergency shelters for approximately 38,000 displaced persons, an increase of 3,000 in the past 24 hours. The shelters provide water and one meal per day, but face a shortage of blankets, mattresses, hygiene kits, and non-potable water for washing. One shelter in the northern village of Khalil Uweida (near Izbet Beit Hanoun) is behind IDF lines and has not been accessible for

over two days. UNRWA requested urgent clearance from the GOI to re-supply this shelter with food and water.

Food

¶17. (SBU) USAID contractors reported on January 14 that Gaza City markets were better stocked with basic commodities than last week, given the increased number of supplies through Kerem Shalom. However, OCHA reported that rice, flour, oil, meat, chicken, and milk remain in exceedingly short supply, and that only nine out of 47 bakeries are operational. OCHA contacts estimated that 90 percent of Gazans now depend on food aid; however, WFP and UNRWA food distributions reach only 200,000 people - less than 20 percent of the total population.

Cash

¶18. (SBU) Banks remain closed. UNRWA is working with the Palestine Monetary Authority to coordinate the entry of cash to pay its workers and make social welfare payments. No other cash transfers have been approved by the GOI.
WALLES